

professional sports, the current Super Bowl champions, currently undefeated—and maybe the strongest team in the NFL this year—the Green Bay Packers.

Packer fans will tell you they're unique: little Green Bay, Wisconsin, with only 104,000 people, a metropolitan area of less than a third of a million, the smallest sports media market in the United States, but arguably the most successful franchise.

Green Bay is special perhaps for another reason: it's the only franchise in all of Major League sports that doesn't have to worry about some billionaire egomaniac running the franchise into the ground or being tired of it and selling it off to another city, or just the community being held hostage by obscene demands for even more revenue, more sacrifice from fans and the community.

You know, that's been the fate. About one city a year since 1950 has had a franchise change, and many others have had the screws put to them. But the Green Bay Packers, are owned by 112,158 shareholders. Each shareholder is given voting rights in the franchise, and no shareholder can hold a controlling stake in the company. The Packers can raise funds for team expenses through prudent decision-making by the board of directors and by offering public shares.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is something to be said for the approach of the long-term success of the Green Bay Packers; but, sadly, the billionaires who run the NFL and other professional sport franchises have decided otherwise. All Major Leagues, formally or informally, prohibit public ownership. The NFL formally outlawed public ownership in 1961—the same year it instituted a radical revenue-sharing policy—but grandfathered in Green Bay. Major League Baseball outlawed public ownership through an informal resolution passed in the mid-1980s when Joan Kroc sought to donate her baseball team, the Padres, to San Diego.

Well, I think the sad record is that the billionaires are not always so brilliant; but they are long on money, political influence and ego, and they know a sweet deal when they've got it. The franchises to this point have been a ticket to even greater wealth in part because these franchises are part of a cartel that would be illegal in most other industries. Guaranteed massive profits, they're the only show in town. They often can threaten to pick up and move and of course witness some of these egregious stadium deals.

I was just in Cincinnati earlier this week; and people there, whether they're conservative, liberal, Democrats or Republicans, are still holding their heads about being saddled with an egregious contract for a recent new stadium that put all the revenue upside in the pockets of the owner.

George Steinbrenner recently passed away. He was a wealthy man to begin with from a family business, but he be-

came a billionaire based on his Yankee empire and his ability to further enrich himself as a result, in part, of the construction of a brand new Yankee Stadium that not only cost an astronomical sum for the taxpayers of New York, but further inflated the value of his ownership of the Yankees.

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There have been critical appraisals that have suggested that it would have been cheaper for New York to simply buy the New York Yankees outright for the value of the team than submit to the outrageous demands from Steinbrenner to keep them there.

Well, the gravy train is fueled by another source of revenue; not only having communities and fans over a barrel, but they have an antitrust exemption that enables them to negotiate lucrative television contracts worth billions of dollars. For instance, the current NFL contract worth \$3 billion a year to go with the \$6 billion that has been pried out of locals for stadium deals and parking.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to look at legislation Congresswoman HAHN and I will be introducing today. Give fans a chance. It's time to do that, to broaden the ownership options, allow democracy and the free enterprise system to work.

MAKE THE BUDGET PROCESS TRANSPARENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, the American taxpayer is facing a struggling economy, skyrocketing debt, and political partisanship here in Washington. While every American family must balance the budget, the Federal Government does not have to do the same.

Additionally, publicly traded companies are required to provide financial statements for their shareholders, whereas the government is not held accountable to the American taxpayer. That is why Representative MIKE QUIGLEY and I are introducing bipartisan legislation that would require the Federal Government to prepare and publish online periodic financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the government's true financial condition.

In the short time that I've been in Congress, I've focused my efforts on creating an environment that fosters job creation and gets our economy back on track. Part of that effort involves America's fiscal house getting in order, and that is why I've worked to curb out-of-control government spending.

Moving forward, I believe that we must also reform the way our Federal accounting methods are conducted to make the budget process more transparent and accessible to every American so that they, as taxpayers, can truly know how their money is being

spent and what our government's true liabilities are. That is why I'm introducing the bipartisan Truth in Government Accounting Act, H.R. 3332.

To protect private-sector shareholders, the Federal Government requires each publicly traded company to file periodic GAAP financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the company's true financial condition. By contrast, the Federal Government's own accounting practices substantially conceal and confuse the Federal Government's true financial condition, especially with respect to long-term unfunded liabilities and year-over-year spending.

To protect taxpayers as much as the private-sector shareholders, the Federal Government should similarly require each Federal agency to file periodic GAAP financial statements that are independently audited and that accurately reflect the agency's true financial condition. The Truth in Government Accounting Act would require the Federal Government to do so, to make the resulting Federal Government financial statements easily available online, and to require zero-baseline budgeting.

This bill will require all Federal agencies to provide three quarterly and one annual consolidated financial statement, just as the private sector must do, using the fair-value accrual accounting method on all their assets and liabilities, including unfunded entitlement liabilities. These statements will be audited by a single entity, the Government Accountability Office, an independent, nonpartisan agency that reports to the Congress. These audited statements will be put online, in terms of a searchable Web site for all Americans to use and to see easily.

As incredible as it may seem, there's not a simple way for the American public to easily view our national budget with all of its liabilities, current and long term. What exists now is a system where information is scattered between Federal agency and government office Web sites. Our bill creates a simple and accessible Web site that can be a one-stop shop for all information related to our Federal budget, based off of Web sites that we know currently exist, like recovery.gov.

Americans deserve a transparent way to see where their tax dollars go and what they are on the hook for in the future. The bill will require the Congressional Budget Office to use current year spending as a baseline for estimating future mandatory and discretionary changes to determine whether the future legislation would increase or decrease Federal spending. It will be measured against current year spending and not against previously anticipated and hypothetical future year spending.

The American people deserve an open and transparent budgeting process, and the Truth in Government Accounting Act provides just that. By requiring

agencies to provide quarterly financial statements, auditing those financial statements and putting that information on a comprehensive Web site, as well as implementing the zero-based budgeting, we will greatly improve our Federal budget practice and enhance the public's ability to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

We expect and demand that companies conduct their business in a transparent manner. We should expect and demand no less of our Federal Government.

I want to urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this legislation. The American taxpayers deserve true accounting of how their money is being spent.

PUERTO RICO'S ABUSIVE GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I've come to the floor on several occasions this year to denounce the abuses of the current government in Puerto Rico and discuss where the government has taken actions to suppress dissent and conduct business in secret, cutting the people out of the process of governance.

I've discussed the current regime's push for a dangerous, environmentally risky 92-mile natural gas pipeline known locally as the "gasoducto"; the violations of civil rights and human rights of workers who protested the firing of up to 30,000 government employees; closing the legislature to the press and the public and conducting their business in secret; the violent treatment of students who opposed a steep fee increase, whose protest was broken up with billy clubs and pepper spray; the civil rights abuses revealed in the devastating report by our own U.S. Department of Justice about the systematic abuses by the Puerto Rican Police Department; and the attempt to destroy the Puerto Rican Bar Association, one of the most important independent organizations of civil society.

And the reaction in official Puerto Rico to my denunciations here in the House is telling as well. The legislature in Puerto Rico, both Houses, controlled by the ruling party, approved a joint resolution condemning me—not condemning the abusive tactics and oppressive practices I denounced, and that the Department of Justice confirmed exists—but condemning me for telling you about them.

Now the effort in Puerto Rico to silence any and all opposition has reached a new low. Incredible as it may sound, according to press reports published in Puerto Rico, the Vatican sent an official to conduct an investigation on allegations of political involvement by the archbishop of San Juan, conducted in secrecy until the press got wind of it this week.

While no names have surfaced on who filed an accusation against the arch-

bishop, or who was in contact with the Vatican, it is telling that the elite of the ruling party has been quick to saturate the airwaves and pages of local newspapers with loud public accusations against the archbishop.

Attacking the archbishop is nothing new for the ruling party in Puerto Rico. They've done it many times in the past.

I'm a strong supporter of the democratic principle of separation of church and state, but as someone who has spent my life working to defend the rights of workers, minorities, working class people and immigrants, I have often been joined by people of faith and, particularly, leaders of the Catholic Church.

Just as here on the mainland, in Puerto Rico there is a broad religious leadership that has joined with the people as they strive to achieve a greater degree of social justice. Among those people is the Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan.

Archbishop Gonzalez Nieves has courageously stepped forward on very important issues in Puerto Rico, such as the struggle to achieve peace on the island of Vieques, the need to protect civil rights and free speech, the freedom of political prisoners, and the just treatment of the poor.

But the one issue that has inflamed the passions of the ruling party against the archbishop has been his clear and firm stance on the need to reform Puerto Rican identity and the existence of a Puerto Rican nation. He has expressed a bold and comprehensive opinion in reference to Puerto Rican nationhood. That quote is, "Motherland nation and identity are indivisible gifts of God's love."

He's had the temerity to incorporate the Puerto Rican flag into the Catholic Church, a Puerto Rican church.

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Mr. Speaker, this is just another instance where the regime, through any means necessary, seeks to silence all voices of opposition and undermine all independent institutions on the island. Whether they initiated the effort to silence the archbishop or whether they're just cheering it loudly from the sidelines, the current regime in Puerto Rico is repeating its pattern of driving all opposing forces into the wilderness.

Mr. Speaker, I am one voice, and I suspect that the Archbishop Gonzalez Nieves is another that cannot be silenced or driven into the wilderness.

I will be going to Puerto Rico this Friday night and trekking to the mountains of Adjuntas to meet with the good people of Casa Pueblo this Sunday where we will discuss the next steps of the people's opposition to the gasoducto gas pipeline project. Interestingly, the archbishop also expressed serious concerns about the gasoducto and in June participated in a meeting with leaders of the community discussing possible actions they could take in case construction of the pipeline actually begins.

I am sure that the regime's attempts in Puerto Rico to suppress the will of the people and impose upon them politically driven policies, such as the gasoducto, or get the institution of civil society to shut up will not be happy to hear what I have to say next week when I arrive on the island.

KEYSTONE XL/CANADA OIL SANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Canadian oil sands transported via pipelines play a major role in supplying the energy needs of southern Illinois. Two weeks ago, I visited the oil sands in Alberta, Canada, and here is exactly what we saw.

On Monday of this week, I visited three facilities also, but before I talk about those three facilities, Daniel Yergin yesterday in The Washington Post said this about the oil sands of Canada: "Oil sands production in Canada today is 1.5 million barrels per day—more oil than Libya exported before its civil war. Canadian oil sands output could double to 3 million barrels per day by the beginning of the next decade. This increase, along with its other oil output, would make Canada a larger oil producer than Iran—becoming the world's fifth largest, behind Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and China."

On Monday of this week, I visited three facilities in southern Illinois that utilize Canadian oil sands: Robinson refinery, the Patoka tank farm, and the Wood River refinery.

Pipelines play a vital role in providing the energy needs for our daily lives. There are over 2.5 million miles of pipelines in this country: 175,000 miles of onshore and offshore hazardous liquid pipelines, mostly oil; 321,000 miles of onshore/offshore gas transmission and gathering lines; and 2,066,000 miles of natural gas distribution mains and service pipelines.

Keystone XL would stretch about 1,700 miles. Again, going back to Yergin's article, he says: "Though large"—he's referring to the Keystone XL pipeline. "Though large, it would increase the length of the oil pipeline network in the United States by just 1 percent."

Due to the high volumes of various liquids and gasses that must be transported, pipelines are the feasible mode of transportation. Imagine trying to transport this gas, crude oil on rail, on trucks, in our major waterways. In fact, just today there was a supertanker that was just hijacked by pirates on the high seas. That's the challenge of moving crude oil other than the pipeline system.

We continue to import oil from countries that are not our closest friends. Further blocking of this pipeline development will only increase foreign oil imports from far-off places that are not our neighbors.